SU44 - The Millenium Issue

(Just in case the Y2K bug actually does something)

StudsUp

The Australian Fans' Perspective

Jan 2000

$3
STILL the best value for money rant in circulation

Do Souths *really* need a Lift ?

Plus – Joeys make History

Plus – Brazil – What did it prove?

Plus – Revealed: The Top Secret NSL criteria

Plus – Tony Labbozzetta sings 'My Way' ?

Plus – MONSTER Doug Utjesenovic interview

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plus our usual reliable informants and fans from the most unlikely of terraces.

Unintentional contributors this time: FIFA, Business Review Weekly.

Happy snaps: Wom and Chu

Disclaimer:

One again we feel we need to point out that we have no cash so there is little point dragging us through the courts. If you feel REALLY upset about something you read over the next 30 or so pages then we suggest you get in touch via the usual channels. You may be surprised to discover that we're really not such a bad bunch of fans. It's just that we get mixed up with the wrong crowd every now and again.

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A quickie from the editor....

Well, the festive season certainly took care of that deadline, eh!

Apologies to those of you who were looking forward to some holiday reading.

We hope your holidays extend through to at least mid-January.

And PLEASE keep those contributions coming!

It makes the likelihood of a monthly release far more, er, likely.

Here we go again....

It has been no great secret that Soccer Australia wish to 're-launch' the National Soccer League in 2000/2001. Coming on the heels of a (presumably) successful Olympic football tournament, the timing would seem right for such a move.

By using the term 're-launch', it was generally accepted that SocAus were looking to start afresh, with a new league management committee which simply wouldn't tolerate clubs which possessed huge debts, poor playing rosters, inadequate administrative structures or a miniscule/volatile support base.

Sound familiar? It is only five short years ago that David Hill stormed into office and attempted the very same course of action. As most of you will no doubt remember, a lengthy legal fight followed, costing the national federation and clubs a small fortune, but in the end Hill won and three teams were unceremoniously dumped from the nation's premier competition.

It was an ugly fight, certainly not helped by certain media scribes having ties with the clubs under the axe, and the subsequent Hill-bashing left the game with a semi-permanent scar. But time has proved that Hill was right. The league certainly hasn't lost any prestige through the departure of Heidelberg, Melbourne Zebras and Parramatta Eagles, and it is doubtful whether the league would suffer should any of six or eight teams get the chop this time.

Unfortunately, the early rounds of the latest bout carry some disturbing similarities to the 1995/96 stoush. The criteria hadn't even been released before certain sections of the press started whipping up anti-establishment feeling. Try this from 'The Australian' on December 13, the day the criteria was due to be delivered to the clubs:

> *One club official, who did not want to be named, claims SA (Soccer Australia) has "set the bar ridiculously high", accusing the ruling body of not having a workable plan.*
>
> *"I haven't seen the documents yet but, from what I understand, the criteria is fantasy stuff," he told* The Australian.

And that in a nutshell, is part of the ongoing problem with the Australian soccer media. In this instance, our only national newspaper reports the ramblings of an unnamed club official who, by his/her own admission hasn't even seen the documents! Yep, worthy of a yellow card.

Now is not the place and time to 'bash' certain scribes, however, as we believe their records speak for themselves in this area. But it is important to realise that these scribes rarely, if ever, speak of which of their 'home-town' clubs should get the chop.

Of all the capital city 'traditional' clubs, only Marconi and South Melbourne appear to come close to the benchmarks mentioned in the criteria, so why the focus should be on the regional clubs such as Gippsland, Canberra and Wollongong almost defies belief.

Naturally, everyone has their own feelings as to why 'their' club should remain in the top division of the NSL – even if a second division is introduced. It would be easy for SU to sit on top of the mountain, survey all around it, and take potshots at clubs who we think don't measure up. After all, we are based in Melbourne, and it would be unfair for us to pass judgement on those we are not fully knowledgeable about. But that would be following the example of those newspaper journalists we have already castigated.

We will, however, try and ascertain exactly which clubs should come under closer scrutiny. Yes, it will be cause for consternation amongst some of our readers, but if ALL sixteen clubs honestly believe that the current NSL model provides the best chance for success, then we have a bigger problem than we originally thought.

Raising (and raising) the bar

Before we look at which clubs are in the gun it is important to put the key measuring sticks on the table. And it is worth bearing in mind the timeframe to meet the required standard. Applications must be submitted by March 31, with the final decision to be taken on June 12. And away we go...

- Five places have been reserved for teams from WA, SA, Qld, ACT and Northern NSW
- One assumes a place has been set aside for a team from New Zealand as well
- Home grounds must have seating for 8,000 with 3,000 under cover.
- Financial standing to account for 60% of the total criteria points.
- New clubs must pay a $250,000 licence fee and have $3 million working capital.

So, on that basis, you'd think that Perth Glory, Brisbane Strikers, Canberra Cosmos and Newcastle Breakers are as good as safe. And probably Kingz FC.
What!, you say? No Adelaide Force/City/Zebras?

Um, well actually, no. The club is in dire strife – just ask the players – and as we saw pre-season, there is at least one consortium in South Australia who fancy their chances of taking on the Zebras on their own (Hindmarsh) turf. Whichever club plays out of Adelaide, there are only six places left for Sydney and Melbourne (and surrounding areas) which means there are going to have to be some very difficult decisions made.

Melbourne

Okay, we may as well start with our strengths. Common knowledge suggests South Melbourne have little trouble meeting the league's benchmarks, although if Sepp's World Club Championship had never got off the ground we may well be singing a different tune. Either way, demoting the back-to-back national champions would be demented. Few clubs manage to produce as many representative players as Souths, although as soon as we type that our minds inevitably flash back to the mid-1990s when the Melbourne Knights were in a very similar situation.

How different it may have been had the WCC been up and running since 1994! But it hasn't, and the Knights have missed out on what would have been a genuine lifeline. Many will point the finger and ask what happened to the enormous sums of money generated by the transfers of Viduka, Horval, Tiatto and so on. While investigations are continuing it would be imprudent of us to speculate on that, but it does seem remarkable that the transfers of Okon, Zelic and co. provoked such huge interest, yet even greater sums of money missing in Melbourne attract little more than sideways whispers. Oh well, a former long-time (Kennett) government minister has been the number one ticket-holder at Somers St for years, so things *must* be above board, right?

And then of course there is the chronic crowd problems – or more precisely, the lack of crowd. Unfortunately their attendances have dwindled in direct proportion to their on-field results, and it seems only the 'derby' against South Melbourne can pull a decent crowd figure these days, along with the now traditional crowd problems at such fixtures.

Carlton is in a similar position when it comes to attendances, but there is a greater air of optimism now that the club is winning again. The critics had their swords out of their scabbards last season as the Blues ran up nine straight losses, but Stuart Munro and his recruits have stabilised the ship and there seems little doubt that the club will make the finals again this season. Olympic Park is still detested by many Melbourne fans, but as the season moves toward the regular season finals and South Melbourne make two visits in April, the Melbourne soccer fraternity will surely be drawn in to witness the latest chapters of 'Il Classico Grande'.

Gippsland are having enormous trouble reducing their debt and demotion to the second division will only exacerbate those problems, but there seems little hope of them getting the nod ahead of Carlton, and there just doesn't seem room for three teams from Victoria.

At least not while SocAus is run out of...

Sydney

And this is where the REAL hard decisions will have to be made. SocAus have made a bit of a rod for their own backs after admitting Parramatta Power this season, and it seems unlikely that they would get the chop, and as we have said earlier, Marconi are one of the few teams to reach most of the benchmarks.
It is important for the number of Sydney teams to be reduced however, for the city's own good.

A Wimbledon player recently commented that the reason London clubs don't win many championships is because there are so many derbies during the year, and one could argue that the NSW capital is now in a similar position.

Which leaves Northern Spirit, Sydney United, Sydney Olympic and Wollongong to fight over the remaining two places. And, residing in Melbourne, that is one argument we'd rather not indulge (too deeply) in, although from a distance, there doesn't seem much doubt that Northern Spirit, despite their very public financial woes, will get the nod. Past that point, things could get ugly.

While Sydney United remain on the bottom of the table there will be little genuine reason for their retention, despite their (almost) glorious history, and the numerous representative players they have produced. SU president Marko Franovic has hardly helped his club's cause, referring to the architects of the 40-page document as "an extended arm of Pauline Hanson's political party" and his continuous whinging will probably lead to a lack of support from rival NSL clubs.

As for Olympic and Wollongong, well, we don't think it's a contest really, but when Olympic's general manager Frank Martin resigned recently his outburst over the way the game is run was certainly just a matter of saying out aloud what many are thinking privately.
Then again, there is always the prospect of a submission SocAus just can't refuse. I mean, someone may have won $21 in the Tattslotto Millenium draw or something...
Now that would really put the pressure on some of those Sydney clubs.

Adelaide

It's never a good look when your CEO storms out the door and bags the club as he goes. But that's what Ned Coton did, after spending an enourmous amount of time and energy trying to restructure/rebadge the club for the new millenium, the members simply decided they wanted to retain the status quo and Ned decided to move to Victoria, where he will take up a key role with the (basketball) Titans.

The fans are grumpy, the players are grumpy, and unless the SA media are prepared to become the club's marketing arm then it will be difficult for them to persuade too many that the (non) Force have a future in the NSL. Hate to be blunt, but...

Likewise, it is hard to see West Adelaide rising from the ashes, but there is always talk of Adelaide United eventually getting their act together...

Brisbane/Queensland

For a while there the banana-benders were becoming the basketcase of the NSL, but recent rumblings suggest the off-field dramas are only just beginning.
It seems that the Strikers' management are serious about relocating the club to Carrara. You know, that white elephant down on the Gold Coast where the AFL mob used to play (until they learned how to play politics and moved to the 'Gabba). That NRL mob too, until they, er, disappeared. The coming months should prove extremely interesting up north, especially if someone wins Tattslotto.

ACT/Canberra

Impossible to see a rival consortium emerging in the ACT which means the Cosmos should be safe for the time being. But they've had enough time to get their act together, and it is time they started challenging for a top six spot or else the second division may well become a fact of life. And to think this season began so promisingly as well...

Perth

Do we really need to say anything?

November 2, 1999
To: Andreas Herren, Media Department, FIFA
Subject: AN IMPORTANT QUERY FROM AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr Herren

Sorry to attract your attention with the capital letters but a potentially embarrassing situation has arisen in Australia.
A number of senior journalists in the country are pushing for Soccer Australia to invoke the FIFA ruling relating to the release of European based players for the upcoming two match series against Brazil on November 14 & 17.

But according to the official FIFA list of upcoming friendlies, the two match series is not listed, whilst the Spain v Brazil friendly on November 13 is listed.
I would assume that FIFA would not sanction all three Brazil matches as full internationals, particularly as Brazil have announced two totally different squads.

I therefore would suggest that Soccer Australia could not invoke the ruling, allowing the European clubs to refuse the players' release. If you could advise me as soon as possible regarding this situation I would be extremely grateful.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Christopher, Editor - Studs Up

November 2, 1999
Subject: RE: AN IMPORTANT QUERY FROM AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr Christopher

Thank you for your enquiry re the above.

The matter needs to be looked at from various angles.

a) It is up to the two associations to determine whether or not they play an "A" international match. FIFA can determine the status after the game, once the reports have been filed.

b) We understand that Brazil will simultaneously field two selections, one in Spain, one in Australia. This is a new situation indeed but again we can only determine the status afterwards.

c) The duty to release players for national team matches of any category depends entirely on the fact of how many international matches the player in question has already contested during the calendar year.

At present, we have not yet received any further information on the issue.
I trust that this will be of use to you.

Yours sincerely,

FIFA
Andreas Herren, Head of Media Department, Communications Division

(Note: This exchange of correspondence took place via e-mail)

But what did it prove?

"I realised the problems that we'd have but I just didn't realise all the other problems which were going to come around in terms of what's happened in the past two to three weeks." - Frank Farina, on the eve of the second match.

Yep, that we can believe. In the weeks leading up the two-match series we were happy to bet the house, the car, and the pet python on Ronaldo and Kewell NOT playing.
So you can imagine our amazement when Ronaldo actually arrived at Sydney airport.
We admit, we hadn't been that ga-ga since Diego arrived in 1993. In fact it seemed that the ridiculous ticket prices were going to be justified – even if Harry was busy snuggling up to his girlfriend back in Leeds or London or Barbados or wherever they were.

Then, of course, Inter and Luxembourgo conspired to deny Oz fans the chance to witness the great one in action, and the promoters did the only sensible thing. Cut their losses and make the matches free.

We say the sensible thing because by that stage the fans, players, administrators, promoters and most of the media had just about had enough. Sure, there were some journalist hacks that loved every minute of the saga, and SU can perhaps be included in that category for some of the more sensational dealings, but having promised so much and delivered so little IMG had effectively painted themselves into a corner. Having realised they could not put on the show they'd promised, there was no way they could justify the original ticket prices. The real question became a matter of how much discount would apply. Given that virtually their entire advertising campaign had centred around Kewell and Ronal-go (as one fan deliciously put it), it gave them few options. It therefore came as no real surprise when IMG honcho Martin Jolly announced the discount would be 100%.

Unfortunately, this did not sit well with the players, and a number of senior Socceroos saw this move by IMG as a slight on their own drawing power with the home fans.

Whether that had a major impact on their performance in Sydney will perhaps never be fully known, but while the two matches provided a good, cheap day/night out for the fans, they provided some worrying signs for the genuine 'roo watchers.

Australia was soundly beaten in the first match and attracted some torrid comment in the press, but there were mitigating circumstances, as Farina himself explained prior to the second match in Melbourne.

Plenty of action off the field as well.....

"We're in an industry where if you don't perform well you get criticised, and rightly so. I don't think any of the criticism which has been put on us, and I say us because I'm part of that, was really unfair. We were pretty much outplayed in the game and we didn't play anywhere near what we can play. And I think a lot of that is due to the lead-up to everything. It was very disappointing, a lot of the players felt a bit let down and it showed in the way we played.

Now they've been stung into action, if you like. It's hurt them to read all that and see everything that's been said so I'm sure you'll see a different performance on Wednesday."

And we did. A glorious celebration of the game, played in an excellent spirit, with perhaps the right result as well.

But prior to the celebration came the catastrophe, with Ned Zelic storming off to Tullamarine and announcing his retirement from international football. Zelic has been the centre of storms before, but after being told he would not be starting in game two he decided enough was enough.

High noon approaches as Farina holds court over THAT meeting....

The signs were clear the day before game two, when Farina held court with the assembled media. He had just had a lengthy discussion with four defenders, away from the rest of the squad who were playing a scratch match under the watchful eye of assistant coach Graham Arnold.

"I'm not saying that we're going to play with the four there, they are the four defensive players we almost used in the first game. Whether we throw in a sweeper in behind there, we'll just have to wait and see. I was just going over their role, things we didn't do so well, especially in the first half on the weekend, what I'm expecting of them and what I'd like them to be doing as well."

Which made it 'unofficially official' that Oz would be using an orthodox back four for the second match, putting the squeeze on a midfield position, given that Okon would be pushed into midfield with the back four set to be Muscat, Moore, Vidmar and Laybutt.
Suddenly Okon is the captain and Ned is on his way home.

As yet Farina is yet to chase down the midfield star, but one assumes a meeting will take place sometime in 2000. It will be interesting to see if Raul Blanco instigates it.

The worrying part of Farina's thinking was that he would suddenly revert to a 4-4-2 after one bad performance. Not by individuals either, but virtually the entire team. Did he have such lack of faith in his preferred system that he would abandon it after one match? Or was he determined to experiment with players and systems? Er, over to you Frank.

"I said at the beginning of the series that I didn't want to experiment too much, but the way it's gone, I've got a lot of players here, I know what they can do, they've been playing for Australia for a long time. There's a few players here who I don't know how they play and how they'll react to different situations and against different teams."

So the fans were left to digest a couple of experimental efforts from the home side while the visitors went about their business in exemplary fashion. They worked beautifully as a unit, had a wonderful harmony amongst themselves, and were led by a coach who treated the two match series as if his career depended on it.
He was critical when he had to be, and gave praise where it was due. In short, a masterful performance from a masterful coach. We can't wait for him to return in September with his gold-medal favourites.

Oh, and it would be remiss of us to mention that 'spooky' element in game two. You know, the MCG in November, (almost) packed house, Oz goes in at half time 1-0 up thanks to a goal at the Punt Road end by their number 11, Oz extends the lead early in the second half, then a spectator invades the pitch, then the visitors get two late goals....

And so 1999 ends the way it started – without a full international. And hence our FIFA ranking drops to its lowest point ever. Probably fair enough too, if we are unable to beat either a club side in pre-season mode or an under 23 combination.

Too harsh? Er, isn't that what SU is all about? Let's face it, our ranking is a disgrace, and our national federation is to blame. How can we possibly go a complete calendar year without a full international? Hmm, sorry, I guess we've already answered our own question.

At least 2000 promises to be better. Um, we said *promises*, okay?

The People's Game(s)

Game 1 – Stadium Australia – Sunday, November 15, 3pm
Australia 0
Brazil U/23s 2 Alvaro 32, Alex 39

Game 2 – MCG – Wednesday, November 18, 8pm
Australia 2 Paul Agostino 11, 81
Brazil U/23s 2 Ronaldinho 75, Fabio Junior 86

Soccer starts to pay off...

For some, the world is all about money. And not just in soccer. Parents have always dreamed of their kids being in the $100+k per annum salary bracket, whether it's been in finance, medicine, architecture, or more increasingly these days, sport.

So just for the record, just so we can refer back here in December 2009, we felt it relevant to point out some interesting facts from Business Review Weekly's annual Rich 50 List in the field of sport.

Golf, with seven entrants, had the highest representation in the top twenty, but as if to prove that soccer WILL become the preferred football code by parents in this country next century, six Europoos featured in the same top twenty.

During 1999, the estimated gross earnings of Mark Bosnich (8), Harry Kewell (9), Mark Viduka (12), Paul Okon (13), Mark Schwarzer (15) and Craig Moore (18) were all significantly higher than the highest paid AFL, rugby league or rugby union player.

With earnings ranging from $4.2m to $1.5m for those six players alone, the mind boggles as to how many Australian soccer players would be earning over the magic $100k mark. And the sport (supposedly) hasn't even taken off here yet!

Young Harry: Number 9 and looking up

World Club Championship? (Not quite a misnomer, but...)

Day of reckoning beckons for the Oceania champions

Sepp Blatter has always (correctly) believed that there is a need for an apex to the club footballing pyramid. Just as there is a World Cup for nations (and not just an annual event between the champions of Europe and South America), there should also be a World Club Championship.

So, before you can say Maracana, South Melbourne is heading to Brazil to take on the likes of Manchester United, Necaxa and, perhaps most dangerous of all, Vasco da Gama.
And they are going with a squad which is in fact WORSE than the squad which won the championship!

The departure of Michael Petkovic to Europe was a particularly savage blow, but coach Angelo Postecoglou wasn't overly concerned. After all, they had been 'sent' a goalkeeper, Milan Udvaracz, on the recommendation of Ferenc Puskas, someone who would no doubt fill the boots left vacant by Petkovic. Udvaracz was subsequently put on trial in the pre-season Tynan-Eyre Cup, and having got through that, er, test, was considered worthy of a contract.

Well, it didn't take long for the increased tempo of the regular NSL season to find Milan out. By round 9 the knives were out after a series of questionable blunders, but his dismissal for (allegedly) spitting on Alastair Edwards in Perth in Round 11 has really left the club exposed.

Incredibly, the club chose not to go out and pursue a new first-choice goalkeeper, but instead signed rookie Chris Roche from Victorian state league club South Dandenong.

South who? Yes, South Dandenong, who played in the Vic Premier League during 1999 but were relegated after finishing amongst the stragglers in a league which barely rose above mediocrity. To be fair on Roche, he was one of the few bright spots in a poor season for the Albanian-backed club, and at 24 he certainly has an NSL future ahead of him. But, to paraphrase the legendary Zoran Matic, why buy a Volkswagen when you need a Ferrari?

But it would be unfair to concentrate on the penalty box when the whole pitch needs attention. Postecoglou, believing that the squad which won the national championship deserved the right to go to Brazil, chose not to purchase a couple of ready-made 'first eleven' players to really put the wind up his champions. Instead, he opted for Richie Alagich (West Adelaide) and Anthony Magnacca (Canberra via Sunshine Georgees). Both boys will no doubt prove to be useful long-term purchases, but the chances of them contributing greatly to the club's Brazilian sojourn are remote at best. Already, Alagich has been sidelined with an ankle injury for most of the season, while Magnacca's contributions (as expected) have been primarily as a substitute.

In his typically laconic way, he has repeatedly said that rather than invite guest players he would rather find out exactly where Australian soccer stands on the world stage – presumably even if that means under it.

The real danger in South Melbourne's misplaced loyalty' philosophy is that should the Oceania champions cop a severe beating at the hands of their more illustrious rivals, it will be difficult to argue for an automatic qualification place for Oceania in future editions of the World Club Championship. And a severe beating is not exactly out of the question. With the "two groups and a final" format not allowing for semi-finals, there is a genuine chance that the group winner may need to rely on goal-difference to make the final.

If Souths originally thought that the big guns would get a lazy four or five and then ease off, then they are now starting to realise the gravity of the situation. Should Man Utd and Vasco draw their clash, then goal difference will decide the group winner, which means Souths may well need more than a new first choice 'keeper to avoid humiliation.
And we don't mean acquiring two new goalkeepers.

What was that about waiting so long for something you actually get it?

And we even get to see it!

Once again SBS have come to the party when it comes to events involving Australian teams, and the announcement that ALL South Melbourne's matches will be screened has given a lifeline to fans who may otherwise have seen very little of the event.
Indeed, it was looking grim for the journalists as well for a while there. On a recent excursion to a suburban press-box, SU was aghast to discover that the mainstream Melbourne journalists were seething over the lack of interest in their involvement by South Melbourne.
While Souths were happy to field initial enquiries from the journos, it appears that their requests were put at the bottom of the pile and with barely three weeks before the tournament kicked off it suddenly became apparent that all direct flights to Brazil were booked out.
One intrepid soul, The Age's Michael Lynch, has decided to go to Brazil, although it will take some two and a half days by the time he goes via Los Angeles, New York and somewhere in the Caribbean for a re-fueling stop.
No doubt South Melbourne's 35 seat allocation from FIFA on a direct flight is filled by the most important people of all – players, coaching staff, club officials and, um, more club officials.
After our blast in SU43 over their treatment of the media, we await with interest to see what sort of media releases the club puts out for the benefit of the media who can't actually get there.

FIRST ROUND
Group A - Real Madrid (Spa), Al-Nassr (Saudi A), Corinthians (Braz), Raja Casablanca (Mor)

Group B - Man United (Eng), Necaxa (Mex), Vasco da Gama (Braz), South Melbourne (Aust)

Wednesday, Jan. 5 At Sao Paulo
Real Madrid vs. Al-Nassr
Corinthians vs. Raja Casablanca

Thursday, Jan. 6 At Rio de Janeiro
Man United vs. Necaxa
Vasco vs. South Melbourne

Friday, Jan. 7 At Sao Paulo
Real Madrid vs. Corinthians
Al-Nassr vs. Raja Casablanca

Saturday, Jan. 8 At Rio de Janeiro
Man United vs. Vasco da Gama
Necaxa vs. South Melbourne

Sunday, Jan. 9 No games scheduled

Monday, Jan. 10 At Sao Paulo
Real Madrid vs. Raja Casablanca
Al-Nassr vs. Corinthians

Tuesday, Jan. 11 At Rio de Janeiro
Man United vs. South Melbourne
Necaxa vs. Vasco da Gama

FINALS - Friday, Jan. 14 At Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Third-Place - Group A runner-up vs. Group B runner-up
Championship - Group A winner vs. Group B winner

Note: SBS will be televising South's matches at approximately 9:30am (ESST) on the day AFTER the date listed above – due to the fact Brazil is around 13 hours behind. i.e. Vasco v South will be screened on the Friday morning.

For all the up-to-date info log on to the official South Melbourne website at
www.southmelbourne.com.au
Where website manager Damian Smith will have club officials AND fans reporting from Brazil, allowing the site to be updated daily (at least!).

Get the Book out (literally)!

Or more precisely, the Refs Reds Report.

Yes Folks, it's time for a little lesson in the three 'r's. Time to check up on why we've had a few wild weekends recently. Depending on the need this may become an irregular feature, but in this initial stanza it may be worth analysing whether refs with loads of reds have been justifiably criticised.

Leading the way after twelve rounds is Matthew *'Have cards, will travel'* Breeze (pictured right), a relative newcomer to the NSL ranks but young enough to be earmarked by refs honcho Gary Power and co as one of our key referees of the future. It took *'Hic,w!'* four rounds to find his red card but he's been in rapping form since, accumulating SEVEN reds and an astonishing FOURTY-EIGHT yellows.

Right up his clacker though is Mark *'Bringing a card to a game near you'* Shield who, with six reds in eight matches, is certain to clinch the 'Golden Whistle' should Power and his team retain his services.

Worth keeping an eye on Simon *'Hmm, I remember you...'* Micallef as well. With fifty bookings from just ten matches, he obviously has the pedigree to stake strong claims as the season progresses. So why was he the only ref NOT to send someone off in Round 9? I think we should be told.

As for the clubs, Canberra and Marconi (with five reds apiece) seem to be getting the wrong end of the stick, while South Melbourne (37 yellows) are streaking away in the 'minor' championship. Quite an achievement for a team supposedly 'taking it easy' in the lead-up to the World Club Championship!

The Leaderboards (after Round 12)

	Gms	Reds	Yels
Matthew Breeze	12	7	48
Mark Shield	8	6	41
Con Diomis	11	5	48
Derek Rugg	5	5	22
Brett Hugo	9	4	43
Eddie Lennie	8	4	41
Gerry Connolly	10	3	29
Jeremy Blaney	8	2	22
David Dwight	6	2	20
Wayne Dade	3	2	16
Simon Micallef	10	1	50
Brian Precious	3	1	13
Perry Mur	2	1	4
Craig Zetter	1	0	4

	Reds	Yels
Marconi	5	30
Canberra	5	28
Parramatta	4	29
Melb Knights	4	23
Sydney Utd	4	23
South Melb	3	37
Kingz FC	3	24
Carlton	3	18
Syd Olympic	2	30
Adelaide City	2	29
Wollongong	2	27
Perth Glory	2	21
Gippsland	1	26
Nth Spirit	1	20
Newcastle	1	19
Brisbane	1	17

Get the Book out!

Red Card to the Victorian Soccer Federation for re-electing George Wallace UNOPPOSED as VSF president. Following our revelations in SU42 over a certain incident it seems incredible that the delegates could endorse him once again. Meanwhile, former Victorian premier Jeff Kennett is still the Honorary Executive President despite not being seen at a non-NSL match for years, but the one that *really* got us this month was the announcement of South Melbourne president George Vasilopoulos as Victorian soccer personality of the year.
Vasilopoulos? The guy HATES the media spotlight attached to such a high profile position. Well, perhaps 'hate' is a bit harsh, but to say he is uncomfortable with that aspect of his role is an understatement.

Yellow card to referee David Dwight and linesman Senko Rastocic for the farcical scenes at the Round 11 Carlton v Sydney United match. At this point we may as well let Stuart Munro take over...
"Terminello went off the pitch injured and he came on, he just got himself on the pitch and I said to the linesman 'He can't just go on the pitch, can he?'. I mean, stupid me, opening my mouth... The linesman says 'No'. And the next thing the linesman runs away and starts flagging, and obviously telling him he's supposed to get booked for that, because he's on the pitch without permission.
But the linesmen didn't know who he was. He said it was number two (McPherson).
I mean, he's picked the biggest guy on the pitch from the smallest guy on the pitch.
So I've said to the referee, you know, the referee has shown the red card, and then he said 'Oh no, sorry, it should be a yellow'. And then he spoke to the linesman who said, no, it wasn't the big tall guy. And then he said, we don't know who it was so perhaps we'll just cancel it."
Amazing stuff! And something tells us Munro should get a yellow as well for suggesting the referee book one of his OWN players!

Yellow Card to SBS for their decision to pre-record 'On The Ball' on Fridays. Okay, we appreciate the need to cut costs, but is there any need for a long-winded Serie A preview and Rupert's Premier League round-up when we can't even get the previous night's results? With the NSL being shoe-horned in to the final 15-20 minutes of the program, there seems little need to tune in these days. Especially if you watch T****a World Sports during the week.

Yellow card to SocAus for their response to an amicable enquiry from a Formeroo over the procedure for using his Gold Pass for the recent Oz v Brazil U/23 match at Homebush.
Apparently he rang the governing body to see what directions could be offered to owners of a GP, which entitles the holder to entry to all Australia games under the jurisdiction of SocAus. "It's not valid", he was told by the SA staffer on the other end of the phone. And furthermore, "We can't get you any free tickets because they're like hen's teeth around here..."
This was said despite the prominent former Australian international not asking for any complimentary tickets. "As if I would ring up to bludge a ticket!" said the stunned prominent former Oz international. "I just wanted to know how this pass works."
The answer, dear sir? Er, it doesn't.

TOP SECRET (until now)
Year 2000 NSL Criteria

Yes folks, SU has managed to get a hold of the REAL criteria, the document MOST favoured by the majority of the stakeholders, thoughtfully passed on by one of our, er, reliable informants.

And after all the secrecy that surrounded the release of said document, we have to admit we are a little disappointed by the sensible nature of the contents. Why anyone would have a problem with this is totally beyond us. Anyway, make up your own mind...

1. Name
The National Soccer League will now be known as the Rene Rivkin Discount Insider Trading New Millenium National Soccer League.

2. Format
The SocAus board will revive the experiment of the Northern and Southern Divisions, which failed because the format ignored two crucial points on the compass – West and East. The RRDITNMNSL will have the following clubs.

Northern Division
Devonport Croatia
Gippsland George Cross
Cairns Juvenlus
West Adelaide Hellas

Southern Division
Brisbane City Azzurri
Brisbane Lions
Preston Makedonia
Footscray JUST

Eastern Division
Spearwood Dalmatinac
Adelaide City Juventus
Bye
Wollongong Mac

Western Division
St George Budapest
APIA Leichhardt
Sydney City Hakoah
Marconi Fairfield

There will be a national second division, called the **Premier League**

Perth Purples, Carlton Obsidians, North Shore, Parramatta, Canberra City, Cronulla/Sutherland, Brisbane United, Newcastle United, Auckland, Western Suburbs

3. Names
All clubs must adopt names that identify with a geographical region. The SocAus board has approved the following names:
Croatia, Hellas, Budapest, Makedonia, Azzuri, etc – which are all geographical regions of the world.

Names that are overtly aggressive, religion-based or liable to cause crowd trouble are banned – Spirit, Glory, Cosmos, Strikers, Power, Force, etc.

4. Finance
Because of the shortage of Australian dollars in the game, the following currencies may be used for transactions in the NSL - Greek drachmas, Yugoslav dinars, Italian lira, Kiwi dollars.

5. Grounds
To be approved, each ground must have

1. Goal posts at each end (crossbar preferred)
2. A rope fence to seperate players and crowd.
3. A fish and chip (or fush and chup) shop within 1 (one) kilometre
4. No public transport or parking within one kilometre of ground.

Note: All clubs entering the RRDITNMNSL in 2000 must comply with at least two sections of the criteria by 2005, or by 2008 at the very latest.

So, there you have it. Makes you wonder what all the hoo-hah is about, eh?

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Does this make sense to you? - Part 1
Wear wee try too highlite the ongoing berstedizayshun of the Kween's English.

Okay, the following is a series of opening sentences to a number of NSL round 13 match previews. Honestly, we've copied them word for word, space for space.

Sydney United need a win badly as at the moment the Herculean effort extends only to the fact that they prop up 15 other teams on the ladder.
These two sides have only ever met twice and completely share the spoils.
The Strikers will be hungry after finding a hitch in their armour over the last few weeks.
The creation of a new local derby should be poised to be an electric match.

We probably don't need to advise you that these, er, literary tragedies come from the back page of A&BSW. And while a fanzine doesn't really have the right to point the finger, we do feel obliged to warn all parents of the type of material their kiddies may be reading in the loo.

So, if you see your kids wandering off to the newsagent to get something to read, don't sigh proudly and think how wonderful it is that they want to expand their knowledge. When they return, just check to make sure they've bought something in ENGLISH!

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Headline in Adelaide Advertiser – November 7 – Force needs light of Day
Headline in Adelaide Advertiser – November 14 – Force sees the light of Day

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Did he REALLY say that?

'The Breakers players all behind the ball.....standing like tree stumps guarding their prey' – ABC commentator Peter Wilkins during the Northern Spirit v Newcastle clash in Round 3.

'This has been the most frustrating week in my life for a very long time'. – Paul Wade at the beginning of the Australia v Brazil telecast.

Joeys make History

There is very little SU can add to the reams of material already printed regarding the Joeys exploits. About the only thing the papers missed (as usual) was the team line-ups. So....

Hah! Had you fooled for a minute there, right? You didn't think we were going to mention the appalling performance by the ABC's 'special comments' studio guests, did ya?
Well, we must say that Mssrs Kmcevic and Theodorakopoulos did little for the public perception that soccer coaches don't know a great deal about the game, and did even less to inspire the nation's soccer fans. To think that Eddie was supposedly close to getting the national coach is, er, unthinkable after that performance, while Nick was actually involved with the Joeys squad and still struggled to recall their names!

Oct 15	Montevideo	Uruguay U/17s	1-1	Joe Di Iorio 88
Oct 18	Montevideo	Uruguay U/17s	1-2	Jade North 45
Oct 21	Montevideo	Nacional	7-0	Mark Byrnes 16, 41, Joe Di Iorio 19, 35, Scott McDonald 22, Joshua Kennedy 58, 60
Oct 24	Santiago	Colo Colo	4-2	Mark Byrnes 4, Scott McDonald 57, 71, Joe Di Iorio 66
Oct 26	Santiago	Univ. de Chile	1-1	
Oct 28	Santiago	Univ. Catolica	1-2	Lucas Pantelis 78
Nov 1		Argentina Sthn Sel XI	5-0	
Nov 3	Buenos Aires	Independiente	1-0	Scott McDonald 70
Nov 5	Buenos Aires	Argentina U/20s	3-3	Dylan MacAllister 30, Mark Byrnes 84, Wayne Srhoj 90

Sadly, we haven't been able to get hold of two of the line-ups, but we're working on it.

	Uru U-17	Uru U-17	Nacion.	Colo Colo	Uni. d Ch	Uni. Cat	Indep.	Arg U-20
Matthew Milosevic			X	Xo45				
Jess Kedwell-Vanstrattan		X		so45		X	X	X
Adrian Madeschi		X					X	X
Shane Carsdell-Sherriff							X	X
Aaron Goulding		X	Xo46	Xo46		X	Xo40	X
Mark Byrnes		X	X	X		X	X	X
Iain Fyfe		so81	X	X			so40	so73
Shane Lockhart			X	X		X		
Jade North		X	so45	X		X	X	X
Wayne Srhoj		X	so50	X		Xo56		
Louis Brain		X	X	X				so45
Lucas Pantelis		Xo81	X	X		X	Xo60	Xo45
Bradley Groves							X	X
James Johnson		so37	X	so45		X	so60	
Anthony Doumanis			Xo50			X	so65	
Dylan MacAllister		Xo37					Xo65	Xo73
Scott McDonald		so45	Xo55	X		X	X	Xo83
Joseph Di Iorio		X	X	Xo67		X	Xo45	X
Joshua Kennedy		Xo45	so55	so67		so56	so45	

On the bright side, it was at least refreshing to see a network (other than SBS, of course) giving an Australian soccer achievement the coverage it deserves, and one can only imagine how many ads the Seven Network would have squeezed into the shoot-out.
And speaking of shoot-outs, we have to admit we'd rather lose the final and win the semi-final, rather than lose the semi and win the third-place play-off.
The fact that Brazil were the better team once they concentrated on football shouldn't detract from the fact that the Joeys pushed Brazil all the way and were desparately unlucky not to pinch the match in both normal and extra time. Brazil can say the same thing however, and you have to wonder whether the emotional drain (of a shoot-out) on the players is worth it.
There seems no logical reason why a replay could not be organised. Very few of the participants at the tournament were first choice players with their club, so heading straight home to turn out domestically shouldn't be a hurdle.
Even in the earlier rounds, it is surely worth stretching the rules and allowing additional susbstitutes in an effort to avoid shoot-outs.
After all, if FIFA were prepared to use previous editions of this event to experiment with rules (remember the kick-ins in 1993 and time-outs in 1995?) then there seems no reason not to trial rule changes at a future edition.

1999 FIFA World Under 17 Championships (in New Zealand)

Nov 12	Christchurch	Brazil	1-2	Dylan MacAllister
Nov 14	Christchurch	Germany	2-1	Hitzlspergero o.g. 65, Mark Byrnes 70
Nov 17	Christchurch	Mali	1-0	Scott McDonald 20
Nov 21	Christchurch	Qatar	1-0	Joe Di Iorio 55
Nov 24	Christchurch	USA	2-2	Aaron Goulding 3, Scott McDonald 35
		Australia won 7-6 on penalties		
Nov 27	Auckland	Brazil	0-0	
		Brazil won 6-7 on penalties		

	D o B	Grp C Brazil	Grp C Germ	Grp C Mali	1/4 fin Qatar	Semi USA	Final Brazil
18. Matthew Milosevic	29 10 82						
1. Jess Kedwell-Vanstrattan	19 07 82	X	X	Xy	X	X	X
5. Adrian Madeschi	11 07 82	X	X	X	X	X	X
3. Shane Carsdell-Sherriff	10 11 82	Xy	X	Xy		X	Xo93+
4. Aaron Goulding	29 04 82	X	X	X	X	X	X
6. Mark Byrnes	08 02 82	X	Xy	X	X	X	X
13. Iain Fyfe	03 04 82		so90	so86			
2. Shane Lockhart	26 09 82						
7. Jade North	07 01 82	X	Xyo90	X	Xy	X	X
16. Wayne Srhoj	23 03 82	X	Xy	X	X	Xy	X
8. Louis Brain	09 05 82	X	X	X	X	X	Xy
10. Lucas Pantelis	12 03 82		so48yo82		X	Xo46	Xo55
14. Bradley Groves	29 01 82	Xo59		Xo66	Xyo46		
15. Anthony Doumanis	01 02 82						
17. Dylan MacAllister	17 05 82	so59y	X	X	Xy	X	X
11. Scott McDonald	21 08 83	Xo65	X	X	Xo80	Xo69	Xyo99
9. Joseph Di Iorio	08 04 82	X	Xo46	so66o86	so46	so46	so55
12. Joshua Kennedy	20 08 82	so65	so82		so80	so69y	so99

Andre Kruger talks to Les Scheinflug

AK: Your Team was the big surprise of this World Cup. Did you hope before the tournament that your boys could go as far as this?
LES: No, because we played in the death Group with Brazil, Mali and Germany. It was by far the strongest Group. Normally Germany and Mali had to play for the place three and four.

AK: Are you now happy to reach the final or are you frustrated to miss the final triumph?
LES: At the moment the latter. My Australia was in the better team in the group phase. But overall we are happy with what we achieved here.

AK: But you stay true to your words and finish your job as coach?
LES: Yes, as I said, I finish as coach. From now on I will work as a Technical Director for the Australian Soccer Federation.

AK: What will we see in the near future with the Australian senior team? Do you think they can play on a higher level?
LES: That question is not easy to answer. We've done good work on the Australian youth scene and at the World Cup on U20 level in 1991 and 1993 we finished in the top four teams. But our best players are going overseas. It's a big problem because of the distance to get a strong team together. We had this problem in the last few years, and of course we will continue to have it in the near future.

AK: After the early exit at the U20 World Cup in Nigeria in April, you had lots of heavy criticism. Is the good result in New Zealand a late RACHE for you?
LES: Of course. Some people of the yellow press made myself LÄCHERLICH. The early exit in Nigeria was because of a missed penalty. We had a good team, like Germany in New Zealand. But the football between different countries comes closer and closer.
In New Zealand the Germans had a big chance to beat us, but they failed and fell in round one. Australia reached the Final. We are now Vice Champion of the World.

Robbie Slater – The Hard Way (not a paid advertisement)

Those of you who are still in need of some summer reading could do a lot worse than the latest Socceroo autobiography to hit the shelves. Monsieur Slater has told his life story to Matthew Hall who has managed to go through the hours of tapes and construct an enthralling account of how one of Oz's most famous redheads got to where he is today.
In particular his early days in Belgium and then France make fascinating reading and should serve as an inspiration for those who consider tossing it in when things don't go their way.
The Oz soccer library hasn't exactly been inundated with releases over the past couple of years, so anything this good should be snapped up and digested.
Congratulations to all involved.

Aussies in Germany

Andre Kruger gives the goss on Joe and Ned...

"I don't want to hear the name Simunic again in my life".

These are the words of Hamburg's coach, Frank Pagelsdorf (236 Bundesliga Games for Bielefeld, Dortmund, Hanover, 37 goals).

Simunic's manager, Jürgen Milewski (171 games for Hanover, Berlin, Hamburg, 53 goals), was in negotiation with the club management for a new two year agreement. After a long, hard discussion, the contract was ready to sign and Mr. Simunic can earn with it 1,2 Million German Marks a year. But now the player has switched to Hertha BSC. His second manager (he is rich enough to have two of them), the Australian Miro Gladovic was in contact with the club from Berlin, and when he got the signal that they wanted Joe to sign, he fired Milewski as his adviser.

HSV Manager, Holger Hieronymus (121 for Hamburg, 7 goals - they called him the second Beckenbauer, but an injury finished his career), is more than angry.

"We had done a lot for Simunic. In the last 2 ½ years he played not more than 200 minutes because of injury. But we helped him and gave him the signal that we want to work with him over a long time, but now he said, that he sees no future to play for Hamburg".

Never before in Germany, a club was more duped by a player, was the big headline in the yellow press.

In Deutschland's League is now the winter break. David Zdrilic played in all 17 games for Ulm and he scored three times. Just one reason why he got an invitation from Frank Farina to play with the National Team in January in Chile.

Simunic played 6 games (as a substitute) with 0 goals, Agostino 7/1. I don't think that Paul is happy with the situation in Munich. He is still not a member from the first eleven, the last three games he was not on the bench.

Ned Zelic was eight times on the field and scored one once, when he played his only game as Libero versus Stuttgart (3-1). It was his fourth Bundesliga Goal in the 112th match. That's not enough, said Zelic. From the games statistics I can see that he needed too many chances to score. A point he want to change next season hall.

Ned was in Paris over Christmas with his wife Irena and his daughter Victoria for a few days off, but he spent New Year's night in Frankfurt with his parents-in-law.

"In the next games I can play in the defensive midfield or as a Libero, because our first men for that position, Gerald Vanenburg, finished his football career," Zelic said.

But the talking about the national team, said the man who was voted as the third best player in Oceania last year, is definitely over. *"I don't want to play again under Frank Farina. He did not gave me the feeling that he was behind me. I am sure he doesn't need me any more, his plans for the future are without me".*

If that is the reason, who knows. I am sure that Australia needs Zelic more than Farina, but that's out of my view. The work for the next World Cup Qualifying starts now and in nearly two years we will see if the Socceroos can reach the big aim with out Ned.

All I want for Christmas is... *By Steve Pitman*

Dear Santa

I know what you're thinking as you open this letter "Ho, ho, bloody ho! Here's another list of demands from another pushy kid"

Well you're wrong. This is different. I'm well past that kid's stuff. In fact, none of the gifts I'm going to ask of you are for me. In fact, I'm into giving.

Well, OK, maybe I'm stretching the truth a little because, even though the gifts on my list are for others, I'll probably get a bit out of them as well. You see, I'm an Australian soccer fan and these gifts are for people who loom both large and small in my life. I hope that by spreading a little sunshine on their lives, a bit of it might shine on me, thereby brightening my rather dark little world. And I'm not suggesting the usual useless gifts. They are intended to be functional - the sort of things the recipients could really do with, whether they realise it or not.

I must warn you, though, that some of my requests might be a little challenging. No handkerchiefs and jocks here. I'm trying to exercise a little imagination. But hey! Since you're the kind of bloke who thinks nothing of sneaking into a couple of billion homes in one night, I know you'll appreciate a challenge. So here is my Christmas shopping list, in no particular order.

For Sepp Blatter at FIFA: A globe of the world to put on his desk. I don't mean your usual stock standard 1 globe - I mean one of those jobs that has Australia at the top of the world and everything else underneath. You see, Santa, I often get the impression that Sepp and his mates don't actually know where Australia is, much less what it's like to keep soccer alive here. Occasionally they remember us for long enough to tag us onto the end of South America or Asia or somewhere, but really they've got no idea. So I think this globe might help in some way.

For Rupert Murdoch, News Limited media mogul: A year's supply of mind altering drugs preferably disguised as Viagra so that the little bleeder will take them. I want this pressie for Rupert because I have this theory that somewhere inside his overactive entrepreneurial mind there is a bunch of electronic impulses that keep screaming at him, just like one of his own newspaper headlines - *'Use Media Empire To Spend Squillions On English Soccer And Bag Crap Out Of Australian Soccer'*. I'd like the drugs to scramble these impulses so that the message he gets is *'Use Media Empire To Spend Squillions On Australian Soccer And Bag Crap Out Of English Soccer'*. I know this is unworthy of me, Santa, but I can't help myself. I'm a frustrated social engineer and I'd love to stand back and watch the results.

For Frank Farina, Socceroos coach: Where do I begin? I could fill a Christmas stocking for Frankie. I suggest starting with a bullet-proof vest, the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, and a bullshit-divining rod to take with him on his next diplomatic mission to Europe.

For Ned Zelic, Socceroo in self-imposed exile: A silver plated dummy from the soccer fans of Australia. Also, a copy of the old Bryan Ferry single "Let's Stick Together" from Frank Farina and Paul Okon.

For Raul Blanco, Olyroo coach: An Australian accent so that our electronic media will give him the time of day.

For David O'Leary, Leeds United manager: An all-expenses-paid mystery package tour usable next June. This should be comprised of a flight to Tullamarine Airport, Melbourne and a taxi fare to the MCG where a game of 'footy' will be scheduled. Once there, he should be met by someone completely insufferable (Sam Newman would do), whose job it will be to explain to O'Leary the merits of the game he is watching. Maybe then O'Leary will understand just how desperately Australia needs Harry Kewell, just once in a while. The return ticket to Heathrow should be provided only when O'Leary has seen enough. That shouldn't take about ten minutes.

For Harry Kewell: Australian Passport renewal papers.

For Kerry Stokes, boss of the Seven Network: A Socceroos playing shirt with the following printed on the back:

"Brazil v Socceroos, MCG 1999
Score 2-2
Attendance 80 000
Delayed telecast ..... 9 or 11.30 pm
Ratings ..... Blob
Many thanks ..... your old mate
Wayne Jackson"

Oh, and while you're at it Santa, could you please give a few spicas to the staff at *Media Watch*.

For the Board of Soccer Australia: A sheepdog to attend their meetings over the composition of next year's NSL and yap at the heels of anyone who threatens to stray from the path to Soccer 21. Also, a shotgun with which to administer the necessary treatment to a few sacred cows, and a gift voucher to the tune of about $2 million from a reputable law firm so that SocAus may live to tell the tale.

For those members of the Soccer Australia Board who want to sire a NSL Second Division: Appointments to have vasectomies, and the good sense to keep them!

For the Board of the Melbourne Knights: A copy of Australia's Unfair Dismissal laws and a large wooden spoon. Sure, I know Joe Bisicchia "resigned" but somehow I think the final gift is still appropriate.

For Ned Colen, ex-Chief Executive of Adelaide City: A new job with a club that *wants* to attract supporters. Perhaps Adelaide's next NSL franchise would welcome him.

For John Economos, Chief "Writer" of the Australian and British Soccer Weekly: An English phrasebook.

For the Matildas: Football abilities to match their looks, and sponsorship and outfitting by Nike or some other company that makes a decent sports bra. Yes, I know they've admirably demonstrated that the outfitting might be surplus to requirements, but it didn't hurt Brandi Chastain and the Americans did it? And while I'm on this train of thought...

For the next NSL player of the season: Televised coverage of the NSL awards, with Kimberley Davies as compere, starkers. What? Oh, alright, alright, I'll come clean - this one is really for me, but it's got possibilities. If we cater for the girls with Big Al Hunter dribs, the results could be huge. Think of the ratings. Hell, maybe even the Seven Network would be interested!

Well that's all I want, Santa. Please give it a try. I'll be keeping a watch on things next year just to see how you've gotten on. Merry Christmas!

"Now *there's* a derby coming up"

Les Murray's memorable one-liner when American Samoa were drawn with Samoa in Group A was the indisputable highlight of the Oceania part of the World Cup draw in Tokyo. Having said that, you know you're in trouble when that sort of comment is the highlight.

With Oz & NZ seeded apart in the draw it has taken the fun out of things a bit. It would have been nailbiting being an Italian fan, for example, as the options suddenly become either Rumania or Germany! But we imagine the only fans as bored as us were the Kiwis.

The Oceania Executive meets in Auckland on January 15 to decide on the dates and venues for the qualifiers, but given their recent track record in switching formats on short notice it might be worth chucking an idea or two about just for the fun of it.

With each country receiving a million bucks for entering the qualifying tournament, it should mean that the qualifying process could be elongated a little to allow the smaller nations to play more games, even if the end result of a Oz & NZ final eventuates anyway. It's the only way the smaller nations can truly develop.

So...

Why not play a ten team round robin? New Zealand could host the first round of four matches in a three week period in June 2000, with Australia hosting the second phase of five rounds in a three week period in June 2001. If Fiji want to host a few games then that would be perfectly acceptable (or maybe not if you ask Ange Postecoglou!). The top three nations would then go into a tri-nation series in late October or early November 2001 as the perfect lead-in to the South American play offs.

Either way, we should know by January 15 the basic timetable although whether that will make any difference in whether the Olympics are available could possibly be ah, let's let Frank Farina take it up.

"I'll be putting out the team which I think is the best available team at that stage. If that includes overseas based players, which I'm confident it possibly could, that's something we'll have to cross when we come to that bridge."

So, besides having to brush up on his cliches, our new national coach is still to convince the fans that our best side will take the field in EVERY qualifier. Hmm, at least Venables arranged that much (Viduka fans can pipe down for a moment...).

On the other hand, of course, it will provide the local-based young players (Olyroos) with sufficient incentive to shine over the next couple of years, with the opportunity to pick up full international appearances, which just happens to be something there hasn't been a lot of recently.

It is crucial that Farina continues to 'cap' as many players as possible, even if it means a two match series against Tahiti to 'toughen' em up for their Kiwi stoush. Can't help thinking back to when Eddie Thomson capped a relative unknown called Harry Kewell in Antofagasta a few years back. It would be tragic to think some screwed-up kids get away and play for England or Croatia (to name just two) before we managed to recognise their potential.

Over to you Frank.

Group 1: Australia, Tonga, Fiji, American Samoa, Samoa
Group B: New Zealand, Tahiti, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Cook Islands

Vic Premier League just around the corner ..

In fact it all starts on Friday, February 4 at Jack Edwards Reserve in Oakleigh, where the two promoted teams, Oakleigh and Heidelberg United, yes, that Heidelberg Utd, will provide the first of the season's TWENTY Greek derbies. Last season's corresponding fixture was a fiery, er, make that smoky affair, with the referee needing to halt proceedings on three separate occasions due to flare fights.

But that may not be the highlight of the opening round. The real fireworks may be at Green Gully, where the rebadged (again) Bulleen Zebras go head-to-head with the rivals for a spot in the national second division. And it's the 99 champs versus the 98 champs just for good measure.

With the proposed national second division looking like a possible starter after all the VPL has been given a a badly needed booster shot, following the decision to once again run the league under the first past the post system. No finals means little end-of season excitement, although most of the excitement this season is likely to come off the field anyway.

Take Heidelberg, for instance. Yes, *that* Heidelberg. At a recent press conference president Elias Deliyannis revealed plans for a $4 million upgrade of their Olympic Village base, which he claims will help elevate the clubs aspirations of joining the proposed NSL Second Division next October. And they're not mucking around on the park either, with new signings including Adam Pongho & Tony Oularis (Carlton), Cameron Brown (Westvale), and the Sunshine George Cross pair Alfonzo Opazo & Cesar Helmosilla.

As usual there has been plenty of other movements during the off season but we'll save most of that for SU45. Although interstaters may be keen to know that Alan Davidson has replaced Gary Cole as coach at Bulleen.

In the meantime here's the first coupla weeks' fixtures just in case we're running late again (surely not!)

Round 1 Fixtures

Fri Feb 4	Oakleigh v Heidelberg United	Jack Edwards Reserve, Oakleigh
Sat Feb 5	Altona Magic v St Albans Saints	Paisley Reserve, North Altona
Sun Feb 6	Green Gully v Bulleen Zebras	Green Gully Reserve, Keelba
Sun Feb 6	Fawkner Blues v Altona East Phoenix	Jukes Rd, Fawkner
Sun Feb 6	Preston Lions v Melbourne Raiders	Connor Reserve, Reservoir
Mon Feb 7	Port Melbourne v Bentleigh Greens	Anderson Reserve, Pt Melbourne

Round 2 Fixtures

Sun Feb 13	Altona East v Preston Lions	Paisley Reserve, North Altona
Sun Feb 13	Bentleigh Greens v Fawkner Blues	Kingston Heath, Cheltenham
Sun Feb 13	St Albans Saints v Oakleigh	Churchill Reserve, St Albans
Mon Feb 14	Bulleen v Port Melbourne	Veneto Club, Bulleen
Mon Feb 14	Heidelberg v Green Gully	Olympic Village, West Heidelberg
Mon Feb 14	Melbourne Raiders v Altona Magic	Epping Soccer Stadium, Epping

Interview with a Formeroo

This Month – Doug Utjesenovic (Part One)

Where Greg Stock talks to one of Oz's greatest defenders about Oz Yugoslavia, and, er, Footscray...

As one of the '74 World Cup squad the name Doug Utjesenovic is etched into the folklore of Australian soccer. Alongside Peter Wilson, Manfred Schaefer and Col Curran, the defender with the deft touch became the backbone of a side that achieved what every other Australian side since hasn't - an appearance at the World Cup Finals.

Utjesenovic's career did not emerge the easy way. He learnt his trade in the streets and schoolyards of Belgrade before accepting an offer to try his luck in a country thousands of miles away. Bouts of home sickness in the early days even saw the highly skilled defender contemplate returning home before Rale Rasic recognised his raw potential and helped transform Doug into one of the countrys top four defenders. His skill and professionalism were unquestioned as he marked some of the best players in the world in a Socceroo career which last until 1976.

On the 25th anniversary of Australias only foray to the World Cup Finals, SU tracked Doug down at his home in Sydneys western suburbs and started off by asking him what he thought of the lap of honour at the Iran game in Melbourne in November 1997.

DU "It brought tears to my eyes (but) not only mine. At least six players I saw crying. After so many years it was great to be honoured like that. We had met in Wollongong a couple of months earlier and everything was perfect except for the final result, that wasn't very good.

GS : Bad to think the '97 boys couldn't emulate you.

DU "Lots of people put in the paper the wrong impression that we were all jealous of the current players. Every fair minded person should realise for soccer to progress in Australia, it would have been a great boost to qualify for the World Cup. Nobody can take away what we achieved because we are always going to be first. It would have been great for the country's juniors if the Australian team qualified every time.

GS : You were born in Yugoslavia. Your first senior club was O.F.K Belgrade.

DU "I played there all my junior career and signed my first professional contract there. When I signed my first contract I was so happy I didn't even look to see how much I signed for or what my wages were. I was running all the way from the club to home to show my mother and father. It was a big thing for me and also just prior to that we won the Yugoslavian juniors cup playing in the Red Star Stadium. We beat Red Star in the final and it was also a big thing. We all won a Russian watch, the first trophy I ever had. I was fifteen years old."

GS : You had a bad knee injury while you were there.

DU "In the last game I got injured. You had an athletic track around the field and then between the track and the grass is a strip of concrete and unfortunately I had a really fast winger and I did a few sliding tackles and the grass took me and I hit my knee on the concrete strip. I was off for a month but then pre-season started. I was already struggling to get a go with the coach and I just turned back and for three years I played under twenty ones and second grade but I didn't want to finish there. I was really fed up with the system there and I waiting for anything to come. I was looking at a couple of other clubs in the provence of Belgrade and suddenly (Alex) Jagodic who was coaching Footscray recommended me to go to Australia. He has passed away now but he was a great man. If I went to the Adriatic for a holiday for three weeks I would miss my parents so it was a shock to go all the way to Australia. But I was fed up with the system there.

GS : How did you find Rale's coaching of the national team.

DU "He was ahead of his time. A good motivator and the first person to introduce professionalism into Australian soccer. He wasn't paid a professional wage but we believed in him and he in us and he gave us the opportunity. We tried to give him one hundred percent and he respected that.

GS : You had Frank Arok as St George coach.

DU "He came back to St George in 1972 when Rale went to Marconi. Frank Arok is the most qualified coach in Australia by far. It was good to work with him and I lived with him and his family for twelve months. He was a good disciplinarian."

GS : The discipline aspect never bothered you.

DU "It never bothered me because I was scared of him. I never had breakfast with him under the same roof and thats what I mean. He was a coach and manager, sure in himself who knew what he was doing. On top of everything he was a journalist plus with the soccer academy coaching he had good credentials. He worked in Novi Sad under a good technical director there who was a very smart fellow and he became a very good operator. I learned lots of things from Frank Arok.

GS : The goal that Jimmy Mackay scored.

DU "but it was a relief to be honest. It was three games in one and half weeks."

GS : You must have been exhausted.

DU "Mentally more than physically. After the game we went back to the Lee Gardens Hotel and I just sat against the bar, it was a nice quiet atmosphere and I had a beer for the first time in so many weeks. I lay down and it was like a ton of bricks being lifted off my back. I was at the bar till about 1 or 2 o'clock and then I just went to bed because I was so exhausted."

GS : You played against Uruguay. Australia was considered to be a real threat.

DU "In those days, it was hard to organise many warm up games especially with an overseas national team. I played non stop for four years for the national team and played only 34 full internationals with 63 in all together meaning it wasn't easy to find opposition prepared to come all the way to Australia."

GS : Was the preparation for 1974 inadequate.

DU "Definitely. We went to Indonesia, Israel and Switzerland but I don't think it was adequate."

GS : What was the training schedule like.

DU "It was very hard. You see lots of English players they really excel in these types of training sessions but for me it worked the opposite. With me I start slowly and I hit my best against Chile. I played well against West Germany but in the East German game I was very tired. We trained in Israel on the beach. I remember Rale gave the watch to Manfred Schaefer and said run six minutes one way and six minutes back and I couldn't even see him when he turned, that's how far he was ahead of me. When he turned I turned but even though I had a shorter distance to run he still beat me. Except once I cheated and he wouldn't talk to me for a couple of days (laughing). It was very hard but for me I felt the best when I came back from the World Cup.

GS : Some of the players say the 74 team was more like a family do you feel the same way?

DU "Once you live with somebody for six weeks and you hit lots of lows and highs. Sometimes you like to be on your own but the greatest thing about that team was that we tried to adjust to each other."

GS : You came to Australia.....
DU : "On the 30th of May 1969."

GS : .....to Footscray where you linked up with Rale Rasic.
DU : "I played till the end of the season with Rale and then he moved to Melbourne Hungaria club. I was there in the second part of the season and we won the premiership. He moved there and I had a contract for another three years and so I stayed at Footscray. Things just didn't work out. They had great fans but how I lived a single life in Melbourne. They had two flats one above each other. Whenever we wake up in the morning whoever got up first would hit the broomstick on the ceiling and say coffees ready and that was our life. Parties all the time. But as we were doing this for close to a year I don't think its really good in soccer terms and I decided to go back (to Yugoslavia) because I couldn't save anything and I was smoking heavily. I just had no direction in life."

GS : So you went back to Yugoslavia.
DU : "No Rale got a job from Melbourne Hungaria because they are a sister club of the St George and Rale got the job with the national team and Budapest. He obviously knew me and tried to get me to Melbourne (Hungaria) which was very hard because these players that come from Yugoslavia to Footscray come for nothing for free. I was the first player to be sold from Footscray to New South Wales because I told them I wouldn't stay. I was broke. I wasn't unhappy with Footscray just unhappy with my life. At that time if you wanted to go well with soccer you also had to go to New South Wales. Abonyi came two years before me from Melbourne Hungaria."

GS : You came to St George in Januray 1971.
DU : "In 1971 we went straight to the tournament in Japan. For two years I was bludging on my language and didn't learn much english because I was with the Yugolsavs all the time. Rale got a new player from Ireland by the name of Jimmy Herron and he put him in the room with me. He'd come to me and say something and I would say I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon. At the end I was so embarrassed. It was a really funnty thing."

GS : The tournament also turned your form around.
DU : "We beat Japan A, a Danish club and Japan B. I had a few games with St George in the Ampol Cup and didn't go really well. I played as a fullback for Footscray and Rale wanted me to play more as a sweeper. The language barrier and a different culture between the Australian and continental players it didn't really work out. On that tour I had a really good write up and turned the corner and in 1971 I was the Soccer World player of the year."

GS : You were also naturalised
DU : "I got naturalised in 1972."

GS : Was that a hard decision to make.
DU : "No I met my wife and decided to stay in Australia. Australia gave me an opportunity and it was a great thing (for me) to play for the national team."

GS : You remember your Socceroo debut?
DU : "Against New Zealand in a tournament in Jakarta. We won 3-1 in November 1972."

GS : You became an integral part of the Socceroos in the 1973 World Cup qualifiers.
DU : "It was mainly the lads from the 1970 world tour with a few exceptions like both fullbacks. My brother-in-law George Harris was in the squad and Bobby Hogg until he got injured and later came other players like Branko Buljevic and Peter Ollerton."

GS : Did you have a regular roomate.
DU : "At the beginning my brother-in-law (George Harris) was and at the World Cup Col Curran was. Rale wanted mainly to put the new Australians with the Australians. I looked after 'Bunny' and sometimes when he was upset he would say 'Doug, you are worse than my wife' (laughing). One thing I remember, Rale went earlier to organise some accommodation and as a reward he told us we were going to stay in Berlin after the Chile game in some medieval fortress which they had transformed into a hotel. To my surprise when we went in there was only one double bed. And as a joke I always say I got a sore back from sleeping on my back because I didn't know what 'Bunny' Curran is like (laughing). I always say that as a joke."

Well, we have to leave Doug and Greg there, but they'll be back in SU45 where the conversation will cover the 74 games, the incident which ruined his Socceroo career and of his times with St George.

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And speaking of Doug, a copy of '**The St. George Soccer Theme**' found its way into the SU office recently (Thanks, Pete!), and there seems no better place then here to entertain you. As they used to say – Follow the Bouncing Soccer Ball and Sing!

Give it a go St George, Give it a go St George
Pour on the score, Give 'em some more
Give it a go St George

Give it a go St George, Give it a go St George
Keep on bootin' 'em in. You're gonna win
Give it a go St George

Give it a go St George, Give it a go St George
What a scoring machine, in red, white and green
Give it a go St George

Neville Morgan's leaping high, Peter Hensman's flashin' by
Hammer Coe is flying up and pickin' balls out of the sky
And don't get in the way, of the brothers O'Shea
Michael, John and Robbie when they start to make they play

Dougie Utjesenovic won't let a ball get past
And when Dennis Duarte gets the ball things start to happen fast
O'Connor races down the wings, You'd think his boots had springs
Roy Cotton runs rings round 'em and hits 'em where it stings

Georgie Harris won't let 'em past, Brendan Grosse is standin' fast
Rudies Gnavi and Dall-Picca make 'em squeal
Michael Fraser backs it all up when he dives to scoop that ball up
So join in and tell 'em how we feel
Give it a go St. George, Give it a go St.George

Dear StUds Up - P O Box 53, Oakleigh SoUth 3167

Mitchell Puyenbroek lives in Adelaide, and he's not happy....

Dear Studs Up

It is 10:00pm on Friday the 10th, and I have just returned form watching the most disgraceful game of football that I have ever seen. I'm talking about the Adelaide City "Force" v Wollongong Wolves.

I'm not usually one to speak out, but having endured 90 minutes of pure crap, I feel that it is my turn to have my say. Why is it that the people in control of the SA Soccer Federation seem to believe that the SA footballing public is stupid?

It is high time that there is a change in their thinking. It is about time that a new team, a new non ethnic team is introduced. The federation seems to think that just because they change the name of the team and change their colours, we will believe it is a new team.

What an insult. Adelaide City or Adelaide Force, whatever the name, will always be known as an Italian club. You just have to look at the people that run the club to see my point. A leopard will never change its spots. The fact that they are known as an Italian club puts a lot of people off from attending the games!

The Federation is either too blind, or too pig headed, most probably a combination of both, to see my point. The Federation will want to bring in a new team from Adelaide for the 2000/01 season, and it will most probably be the Southern Stars. Again, this is an example of their ignorance to the South Australian footballing public.

Everyone knows that the Southern Stars are just West Adelaide. Why is it that the Federation wants to stay in the past? If they truly wanted a competitive, non-ethnic team from Adelaide in the competition, they have to look no further than the northern suburbs of Adelaide. The population of the northern suburbs is approximately 300,000, and a lot of these are of British background.

Adelaide City said they would like more Australian/ British supporters to attend, but no one wants to travel a 60km round trip to watch shit football! I'm sure that any NSL team based in the northern suburbs would attract a lot more than the 3,000 that watch Adelaide City at the moment.

The point I'm trying to make is, why does the SA Soccer Federation want to stay in the past, both with their thinking and running of the States football? Why is it that any team that comes from Adelaide that plays, or has played in the NSL is of Greek or Italian background?

The Federation wants us to think that the current team from Adelaide is non-ethnic, and I personally consider it an insult. There are a lot of people that feel the same way, but the ones that really count, the public, have to suffer at the hands of the Federation's own contempt for our intellect.

For too long now Adelaide, and the northern suburbs of Adelaide, has had to suffer not having a team to truly call it's own. Now is the time for change, now is the time to have a club based in the north, for the people. If a 20 year old can see it, why can't others?

Bring on Adelaide United! Thank you for your time.

Ross Turnbull (Marrickville) looks at the term 'ethnic' and asks "What is the problem?"

Dear Studs Up

Every time I read of people within the Australian soccer community complaining about the 'ethnic' clubs holding football back in this country I cant help feeling that we are just doing the bidding of the AFL and other 'anti-football' interests.

Firstly, I must state that I agree totally with the campaign to banish nationalism from the terraces, but to carry that through and suggest we have to get rid of 'ethnically based' clubs is tantamount to cutting the game off at the root.

All sport in Australia is ethnically based. If you wish to see an ethnically defined sporting event I suggest a trip to the SCG to see the Sydney Swans play. This is Anglo-Saxon Australia in person - from the four and twenty pies, to the jaunty club theme song, to the insults yelled at the visiting team. No-one seems to be the least bit concerned about this fact (same for cricket) so why are we so angst ridden about the fact that football in Australia represents the diverse cultural backgrounds of the citizens of this country?

I am myself an Anglo-Australian and committed Sydney Olympic fan. My family and I enjoy the fact that Olympic is a Greek based club, the crowd culture is fantastic, the atmosphere is welcoming and above all the football is taken very seriously by everyone.

What is the problem here? No-one suggests that Norton St should be shut down because it has too many Italian cafes, or that the proliferation of Chinese restaurants in the Haymarket is holding back Australian cuisine. Can't we just get over this? Teams such as Northern Spirit have obviously lifted the bar as far as promotion and marketing in the league is concerned and it is not just the other teams like Olympic and Marconi who have to respond to this but Soccer Australia.

Basketball, rugby, league and the AFL have been investing their money promoting their sports as a whole for the last decade. I might have missed it but I don't recall seeing any advertising outside of the soccer media promoting the NSL at all let alone in an effective fashion.

Geoff Coy (North Sydney) reports on some curious goings-on at Parramatta...

Dear SU,

I ventured to Parramatta Stadium on Friday Night to watch Parra Power take on the Breakers. A few Spirit types mixed in with the Rowdies to give the Stadium some atmosphere.

The Quasi-Dunkerley family, that species David Attenborough would find so interesting were also there. You know, half Breaker half Spirit.

Power must be so desperate to attract a crowd and have resorted to the most unusual step to create their own atmosphere, that is apart from the pre recorded "Power XX Power XX" chant emanating from the loud speakers. Located in the temporary stage at the northern end of the ground was a jazz band. For a minute I thought they had arrived late when they started their 'gig' at the beginning of the game. And for a moment I thought I had been transported in time to the Don Burrows Supper Club at The Basement.

Every few minutes throughout the game they would start up a new jazz rendition which was greeted with disrespect from the travelling Rowdies, with jibes and chants such as "rent a crowd rent a crowd rent a crowd" and "shove the band right, shove the band right, shove the band right up your #$%&".

The official crowd of 4,004 seemed to be somewhat overstated and Power officials must now feel quite comfortable in counting by two's. Full marks to the 30 or 40 travelling Rowdies who made the noise of a couple of hundred and must has sung just about every song in their repertoire. A particularly good rendition of Volare Oh Oh(sp) ? by substituting the word Newcastle, reverberated around the ground.

In the end it was all a bit like watching the Titanic. The Power went down (or out) but the band played on.

FOOTNOTE: Maybe the beer tent at Olympic Park could start serving Chardonnay and offer a transfer fee to Parramatta Power to buy the Jazz band. If that doesn't boost the Carlton crowds then at least the music would compliment the alcohol being consumed.

Did that REALLY happen

OCTOBER

15 – What do you get when Force meets Power? A 2-1 win to Adelaide.
22 - Wynton Rufer scores perhaps the best ever goal in the NSL with a stunning volley from behind his body to secure a point for Kingz FC at Newcastle. Rumour has it that Marcus Stergiopoulos apologised to his boss for putting the cross behind him, but that didn't seem to worry Rufer.
30 – Former Socceroo coach Rudi Gutendorf is appointed coach of the national team of Rwanda. "I know, that no one believes me, but I am still fit and in the same and good form like twenty years ago." He said.

NOVEMBER

9 – Sydney Olympic announce that Soccer Australia have refused permission for the club to transfer their home match against Marconi on Sunday November 21 to the Saturday night. Well, actually, SocAus were happy for the switch to take place but the ABC vetoed the move, claiming they were unable to acquire the necessary outside broadcast facilities on the Saturday.
10 - The Parramatta Sun reports that the court case involving David Mitchell and Sydney United is set for hearing in early December at Sydney District Court, the Downing Centre. It is alleged that David Mitchell broke his fiduciary duty as coach of United by signing 17 former Sydney United players to contracts with Parramatta Power.
19 – A bit of history at Breakers Stadium where Alex Tobin is sent off (by Con Dioms, naturally) for the first time in his illustrious 411 game NSL career. And just for good measure Con sends off Aurelio Vidmar as well.
25 – While the Joeys do the business in Christchurch, Harry K is back in the news again, this time with a rumour that he's about to do the business (get married, that is) with his girlfriend, better known around Leeds as Tricia Stokes, the barmaid from Pommie soapie Emmerdale Farm. Harry involved in a soap opera? Surely not!

DECEMBER

8 – Mike Cockerill reports in the Sydney Morning Herald that there is a possibility of a merger between Northern Spirit and Sydney Olympic. Spirit chairman Remo Nogarotto confirms that the idea of a merger was discussed. But once they realised how many problems they'd run into it was shelved pretty quickly. Interesting that the idea came up though....
9 – A major breakthrough in broadcasting! The Senate passes legislation requiring commercial television networks to offer free rights (to either the ABC or SBS) to major sporting events they don't intend to show. Might prove interesting in the future....
11 – Gippsland Falcons score for the third game in a row! And goalscorer Brian MacNicol has double reason to celebrate – he moves a goal clear at the head of the Falcons' scorers table. His tally of two makes him hot favourite for the end-of-season trophy.
13 - Steve Pistevski, a cabinet-maker from Preston (Melbourne) is sentenced to a five-and-a-half-year jail term after pleading guilty to manslaughter. The trial was the result of the death of English tourist Hayden Wederell after a brawl at the Sydney Casino in October 1997, while fans watched the England v Italy World Cup qualifier.
17 – Damian Mori hits a hat-trick as Adelaide City Force romp to a 3-0 win at North Sydney Oval, with the on-field performances starting to overshadow the off-field events – and there are plenty of poor performances there as well....
19 – Carlton defeat South Melbourne 2-1 at Bob Jane Stadium with Andrew Marth scoring the winner deep into injury time, sending the visiting supporters – and most of the neutrals – home in a delirious state. Significantly, the match was free of most of the usual fuckers (that's flare chuckers to you, John) and skirmishes traditionally associated with Melbourne derbies.

BULLETin BoARd

And the winner is....

Anthony Ferguson who came up with the following captions for our pic quiz in SU43.

1. Was that you I saw in the Hair Fusion ad with Plugger?
2. Zero

Okay, so he wasn't quite right with question 2, but he was the closest so he picks up the second booty, and he came up with the only PRINTABLE response to question one, so he picks up the Glory book and SU cap as well. The goodies are on the way....
And to that individual who submitted the, er, lewd suggestion regarding the specimen bottle, well, we suggest you consult your local GP for a referral.

Stuff the mainstream media! Get into fanzines!

The Fat (a Perth fanzine) can be contacted via: **P O Box 970, Fremantle WA 6959** Hopefully the guys will send some freebies our way so we can offer 'em as prizes....

My Blue Heaven (a Carlton fanzine) can be contacted via: **P O Box 235, Brunswick Vic, 3056.** Or you can pick it up outside the ground on matchdays.

The Wolves Lair (a Wollongong fanzine) can be contacted via: **1/38 Macquarie Ave, Camden NSW, 2570**

Three Points and a Hangover (a Northern Spirit) fanzine can be contacted via virtually anyone in the Bob Stand.

Sitter! (a Kiwi fanzine) has already achieved legendary status and can be contacted via: **11 Thames St, Hamilton, New Zealand.** Essential reading, trust us.

A dream won't do....

Those of you that collect soccer-related music should check out 'A Dream won't do', released by Lust in Space with the full backing of the Carlton Soccer Club.
Featuring the voice of Johnny Warren, how could we possibly do anything but endorse it totally! Get in contact with the club on (03) 9[illegible] 7444

SU recommends:

Melbourne Sports Books
9 Elizabeth St, Melbourne, Ph: (03) 9621 1211
and:
The Four Diegos Soccer Show
Stereo 97.4 FM Melbourne Saturday 10am - 12 midday

Imagine the scene .....

... at the NSL Awards Night (held at Club Marconi due to cost-cutting factors) if Tony Labbozzetta emerged from stage left in a dinner suit, signalled to the conductor of the Bossley Park String Quartet and calmly began the opening verse of his trademark tune...)

And now, the end is near, and so I face, my final curtain
I've ruled, this league since birth, and left the fans, feeling uncertain
I've ruled, with much support, from ethnic clubs, some in a sly way
But more, much more than this, they've done it my way

Back then, when things were small, I could control, most of the party
The clubs, and SBS, the ethnic press, and Dom Galati
But then, came David Hill, who drove my friends, right off the highway,
The league, no longer sought, to do it my way

(Curtain opens. Lou S, Remo N and Nick T run out. Remo grabs the microphone off Tony and passes it to Nick while Lou kicks Tony in the bollocks)

Now Lou, Remo and Nick, and all the rest, who know they're smarter
All point, to gruesome facts, like Adelaide Sharks, a dud non-starter
The crowds, at Bossley Park, are thinning out, giving us eye strain
(Tony recovers to grab second mike and mutter)
But worse, much worse than this, Brad has a thigh strain

(Frank Labbozzetta emerges from stage right and guns down Lou, Remo and Nick)

But now, the mix is right, the national coach, is ex-Marconi
If Ned, just buggers off, Okon's the skip, he'll say "Thanks, Tony"
If Kewell, just stays at home, Marconi can, in such a sly way
Get Sean, and Brad to play, and do it my way

And so, the national squad, with all their strife, will use Maloney
The coach, was one of us, so is the skip, and that ain't phony
To think, Marconi still, supplies the press, with such baloney
That Ned, just spat his chips, and hit the skyways.

(Tony is joined on stage by the Marconi Piano Accordion Ensemble, along with the Stallionettes in their regulation matchday attire for the Ricky May-type cabaret finale)

Now look at this mess, look what Hill's done
Time to get out, and cook stuff with my son

Imagine the roar, when I say 'No more.'
Flash them my arse (cue Stallionettes), and slam the door

We had it all, Me, Frank and Paul
And did it my way